Art Cranes for Railways

510.SHRI V.N. GADGIL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether C & AG has passed strictures on the Railway Ministry for improper purchase of ART cranes;

(b) whether order for the purchase of ART cranes was placed without inviting proper tenders;

(c) whether rejection of the cheaper offer of M/s Kirow for supply of the cranes has resulted in extra expenditure of about 60 crores;

(d) whether the cranes supplied by M/s Gottwald were defective; and

(e) whether the certificate of the Commissioner of Safety was produced as required by the Railways Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) A Para No. 4.1.2 regarding import of High Capacity 140T Diesel Powered Break Down cranes has been included in the C & AG's report for the year ended March 1998 (Report No. 9 of 1999 (Railways).

(b) No, Sir. A proper limited tender was issued to M/s Gottwald, Germany and M/s Cowans Sheldon, U.K., which are proven sources for supply of 140T Accident Relief Train cranes used for restoration works in cases of accidents.

(c) No, Sir. The offer of M/s Kirow being unsolicited was never opened and therefore no comparison is possible.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Approval of Commissioner of Safety is always taken for issuing speed certificate for any new design of rolling stock and such a certificate has been obtained in the case of these cranes also.

Scam in supply of wooden sleepers to Railways

511. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news item, appearing in the Hindu dated the 20th August, 1999 regarding scam in supply of wooden sleepers to the Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) M/s Gujarat State Forest Development Corporation, Vadodara supplied 15,000 cum of wooden sleepers vide contract dated 2.3.93. Sleepers supplied against this contract to the Northern Railway were found defective.

Out of the total quantity of 15000 cum, 2200 cum (15,890 sleepers) were supplied to Northern Railway Construction Organization. From this lot, 8162 Nos. of sleepers were received by Northern Railway in August, 1995. At that time, on receipt of a complaint, all the available 6561 Nos. of sleepers were checked and out of these, 6016 sleepers were found defective.

In this matter, three railway officials were considered responsible and disciplinary action under Discipline & Appeal Rules has been taken in consultation with the Central Vigilance Commission.

Besides the railway officials, some other non-railway agencies are also involved. However, in order to determine their criminal involvement, the case has been referred to the Central Bureau of Investigation for detailed investigation. The CBI has since registered the case and the investigation is in progress.

Train Accidents

512. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of train accidents which took place during 1998 and 1999, upto November, 1999 year-wise and zone-wise;

(b) whether any enquiries were conducted in this behalf, if so the details thereof; and

(c) the measures Government have taken to curb train accidents and to provide safety to the passengers.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Number of consequential accidents:

Railway	1998-99	1999-2000 (upto October, 1999)
Central Railway	68	48
Eastern Railway	31	20
Northern Railway	54	41
North Eastern Railway	23	16
Northeast Frontier Railway	27	41
Southern Railway	59	26
South Central Railway	45	27
South Eastern Railway	55	21
Western Railway	26	20
Konkan Railway Corporation	9	2
Total	397	262